



Polygamy indefensible.

T W O
S E R M O N S

Preached in the
Parish-Church of NANTWICH, in Cheshire,

By J O H N S M I T H, A. B.
Rector of the said Parish.

(Price ONE SHILLING.)



Polygamy indefensible. Two Sermons preached at Nantwich, occasioned by a late Pamphlet, entitled, "Thelyphthora" To which is prefixed a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Madan. By John Smith, A. B. 8vo. 1s. Hogg. 22 JY 69

The author of this discourse pays Mr M. some extraordinary compliments on his 'eminent services' in defence of religion, and his 'godly zeal' in maintaining the 'peculiar doctrines' of the Gospel. But he laments, that a Christian minister should be so *be-fooled* by Satan, as to write such a book as *Thelyphthora*. As he had heard it much talked of in different companies, he endeavours to guard the good people of Nantwich against its pernicious influence. For this purpose he shews, that polygamy is contrary to the laws of God and man; that its consequences are dreadful, and ruinous to society; and that it is the bounden duty of every Christian to abhor, oppose, and reject such a licentious and *damnable* doctrine.

This discourse is written in a plain, homely style. The author seems to be one of those divines, who are called *gospel preachers*. Crit. Rev 1781



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T W O

S E R M O N S

Preached in the
Parish-Church of NANTWICH, in Cheshire,

On Sunday, the 10th of December, 1780.

Occasioned by a late Publication, entitled

“THELYPHTHORA.”

To which is prefixed,

A LETTER to the Rev. Mr. MADAN,

By J O H N S M I T H, A. B. *K*
Rector of the said Parish.

*To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and
every woman her own husband.*

I Cor. vii. 2.

I withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed.

Gal. ii. 11.

Nam uxor contenta est, quæ bona est, uno viro,

Qui minus vir una uxore contentus fiet?

PLAUTUS, *Mercat.*

Printed for the Author; and sold by *Alexander Hogg*, in
Pater-Noster Row, London; and by all other Bookellers,
in Town and Country. 1780.

London: Published by

SERMONS

Preached in the
Parish Church of St. Andrew, in Chichester

On Sunday, the 10th of November, 1780.

Occasioned by a



"THE LITURGICAL"

To which is prefixed,

A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Madan.

By JOHN SMITH, A.B.

Rector of the said Parish.

To which is added, the names of the several persons, and
the names of the several churches, to which the same
has been distributed.

Printed by J. Smith, at the Press of the University of Cambridge.

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Printed by the Author, and sold by Messrs. H. & J. B. in
St. Andrew's Church, Chichester, and by all other Booksellers
in Town and Country, 1780.



To the Rev. Mr. MADAN,

Rev. Sir.

THOUGH I have not the honor of a personal acquaintance with you, yet give me leave to say, that I am no stranger to your character.—The long and eminent services which God has enabled you to perform in defence of the Christian cause, have procured you, (and that justly) among many, a great and respectable name. You have zealously preached Christ; you have boldly stood forth in defence of the grand peculiar doctrines of his gospel; which alas! in the present degenerate times, are frequently treated with ridicule, and their advocates with contempt. No opposition however could restrain you from declaring to your hearers the whole counsel of God; and from preaching the truth as it is in Jesus. Wisely have you judged, that the reproach of Christ is far greater treasure than all the riches of Egypt; and that it would argue the greatest prudence, the most consummate wisdom, to purchase the pearl of great price, though a man should lose the whole world in exchange. Actuated by principles purely evangelical, and preaching Christ in sincerity and truth,

B

I have

I have for many years heard of your fame with pleasure, and have read some of your publications with delight and profit. After this declaration, which I assure you is (if I know myself) most cordial and sincere, I hope you will be so candid as to own, that I am not under the influence of a narrow, bigotted spirit, respecting either you or your writings.—No, Sir; I have frequently applauded your godly zeal, and been thankful to God, that vital religion, has, in this degenerate age, met with an able advocate in the person of Mr. Madan. But what shall I say of your last publication, entitled, *Thelyphthora*? There is surely much learning and ingenuity displayed in it: many of your observations concerning the unlawfulness of divorce, except in case of adultery, are, in my apprehension, striking and just; and your remarks on the marriage act, are forcible and right, and as such, I most heartily approve and sincerely thank you for them. Oh Sir, how thankful should I have been had you stopped here!—But, alas! you have proceeded much farther, and, in my humble opinion, by much too far. You have certainly advanced, and ably maintained, several great and important truths; but I must honestly confess, that your book contains likewise many very dangerous, and per-

pernicious tenets. Viewing the matter in this light, I think it my duty to caution my flock against them, as being of a dangerous and licentious tendency.

Your Thelyphthora has lately found its way into my parish; it is much read, and more talked of. My opinion has been frequently asked by my people; and as I wish in all things to promote their spiritual welfare, I will honestly tell you, that I have in all companies reprobated the above tenets, which you (to say no worse) have unadvisedly, and rashly ventured to maintain.

*As Thelyphthora is still the general topic of conversation, in almost every company where I go, I formed a resolution (as I thought it my duty) to attack the exceptionable parts of it, from the pulpit, and from the press. I can appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that I did not engage in this design out of the least prejudice to you, or with a controversial spirit. You know, Sir, I am by my ordination vow * to drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, and to vindicate and maintain the cause of God and his truth. Sensible of the importance of this sacred and solemn obligation, I have composed, preached, and now printed the ensuing discourses.*

* See the Office for ordaining Priests.

I am rather apprehensive that you will think my remarks in some places too severe; but I could wish you would recollect (if you should be disposed to think so) that I am attacking Mr. M.'s errors, and not Mr. Madan. I trust I can truly say that I love Mr. Madan, though I detest, abhor, and renounce his polygamous principles. A few weeks ago I received a letter (respecting Thelyphthora) from a valuable friend at B—. He, it seems, is a strong advocate for your book; and writes to know my sentiments.—As I always wish to deal honestly with others, and to be openly dealt with by them, I have sent him an answer; the purport of which is to reprobate Thelyphthora in the points before alluded to.

I am sorry there is the least occasion for me to differ in sentiment, either from you or him, and that necessity is laid upon me to declare that difference publicly: but the philosopher's adage must plead my excuse. Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas.

I am, Rev. Sir,

*Your affectionate brother,
and faithful servant,*

John Smith.



Polygamy indefensible.

S E R M O N I.

GENESIS, Chap. II. Ver. 24.

*Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother,
and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall
be one flesh.*

THE choice of my present subject will,
I presume, rather surprize you. It
is, indeed, of a very nice and delicate
nature, and therefore unfit, in a general way,
for public discussion: So delicate is it, that
'tis almost impossible to say any thing upon
it without saying too much. For this reason
I always studiously avoided to treat professed-
ly on the institution of marriage.

You, who are my stated hearers, will bear
testimony in my behalf, that it has been
my determination and habitual endeavour to
know nothing among you, *save Jesus Christ,*
and

and him crucified. This is the most important of all subjects; most necessary for all preachers of the gospel to illustrate, confirm, and apply, and most useful for their hearers to consider and digest.

Sensible of this, I have endeavored, by the help of God, and trust, that through his grace, I shall always endeavor, in the course of my future ministrations, to aim at the three following capital points:—1st. To humble the sinner. 2dly. To exalt the Saviour Jesus Christ. And 3dly. To enforce and promote holiness, both in heart, and life. These (as a late pious author,* now with God, has well observed) are the most material objects which can possibly employ both the thoughts and endeavors of the ministers of the gospel. If these are but duly attended to, God will then be glorified, the Redeemer magnified, and sinners saved.

The reason why I now wish to call your attention more immediately to the words of the text, is briefly this. A certain learned and eminent divine of the Church of England,

* The late truly pious and amiable Mr. J. Hervey.

whose

whose abilities, both as a preacher, and writer, are confessedly great, has lately published (shocking to relate!) an artful studied Defence of *Polygamy*. This work has, I am informed, found its way among us; and therefore, I think it my duty, as a spiritual watchman, and in conformity to my ordination vows,* to *cry aloud* against it.

The known learning; the reputed piety; the great and long-established popularity of the author alluded to; together with the specious but spurious arguments of his performance, will (it is to be feared) operate too strongly with some, in defence of this impious scheme. I think it my bounden duty therefore, to caution and guard those who are placed by providence under my ministry, and to warn them faithfully of the dangers arising from such pernicious doctrine. This I shall now endeavor to do, by evincing, from the nature of the original institution of marriage, 1st. That *Polygamy*, is contrary to the laws both of God and man. 2dly. That it's consequences are dreadful, and ruinous to society. And, 3dly. That it is the bounden

* See the Office for ordaining Priests.

duty

duty of every christian to abhor, and oppose such licentious doctrine.

First then, I shall endeavor to shew, that *Polygamy*, is directly contrary to the divine law.—This evidently appears from considering the first institution of marriage, which is recorded in the chapter of the text.—At the 18th verse of this chapter, we find the following declaration:—*The Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone: I will make him an help (not helps) meet for him.* In consequence of this resolve, *The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and he closed up his flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife (not wives); and they shall be one flesh.*—Thus we learn, that marriage is an honourable institution, appointed of God, in the time of man's innocency: It is (as an able writer
very

very justly observes) the first and strongest relation; it began before parental duty existed, and is nearer than any ties of nature. It is, you see, between *one man* and *one woman only*. *They twain*, says our Lord, *shall be one flesh*. This is clearly the original institution; and whoever wilfully breaks in upon the order which God himself has appointed, is surely a transgressor of the law, and subject to the severest condemnation.

Does then the Almighty expressly say, that *a man shall leave his father, and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife*, and that *they twain shall be one flesh*? Who then is he that dares to contradict the divine injunction, and plead for a plurality of wives? Yet alas! so it is. Christ, and the cause of Christ, is now grievously wounded, in the house of his friends; and an able minister, has lately so fallen into the snare of Satan, as thus, unguardedly, though undesignedly, to lift up his heel against the Lord Jesus Christ, by openly opposing his own sacred institution of marriage, which expressly directs an union between *one man* and *one woman only*.

Had *Thelyphthora* (which is the title of this dangerous book) been the production of a lawless libertine, sensible and judicious men would not then have been either much surprized, or alarmed. The agency of Satan would then have so evidently appeared, that as soon as the book had been brought to light, it must have been immediately reprobated, and sunk, with it's author, into contempt and oblivion. But, as the present writer hath for many years supported an unblemished character; as he hath zealously preached, and ably defended the grand and essential doctrines of the gospel; the present error in his judgment is much to be lamented, and it's effects much to be feared.

Indeed, he has a right to claim the privilege of private judgment, in every point which is undecided by the word of God:— But as this word assures us that *They twain shall be one flesh*, and thereby declares most clearly against *Polygamy*, whatever this author's private sentiments may be on this particular subject, it was surely inconsiderate and rash to publish them to the world.

Could

Could an open enemy to God, and all religion, do more dishonour to Jesus Christ, than to appear thus publicly in defence of *Polygamy*?—I trow not.—Satan, I doubt not, rejoices much at the fall of this able writer into his snare; but I trust that through the tender mercies of our God in Christ, he will shortly be delivered from it. When it shall please our God that the scales of ignorance shall fall from the spiritual eye of his understanding, and he is enabled clearly to see the dangerous tendency of his late shocking publication, he will soon and loudly recant. I charitably presume that this is the error of his *head*; not of his *heart*. One primary view of the author is, it seems, to stop seduction, by endeavouring to convince the seducers, that they are bound by every religious tye, to consider the seduced as wives, and as such entitled to a share both of their persons and properties. This I apprehend is one main design of the book. But alas! this scheme will never do. The remedy here proposed to stop seduction, will not, it is feared, have any influence over the abandoned

in the lower or higher stations of life: the former, though possessing no property to maintain the seduced, will not, nevertheless, be restrained from the free indulgence of their darling sin, even by the fear of any expences consequent on it: and the latter will, in general, only consider their fortune as a provision for the flesh, and will therefore have no objection to a full and free indulgence of their sinful appetites and passions, notwithstanding they should be obliged to take care of, and provide for, the objects of their lust. In every point of view then the remedy proposed seems worse than the disease; and therefore in my apprehension, the whole scheme merits nothing but *reprobation*.

However, whilst we condemn the book, let us act with candour and benevolence to the author; considering that even the wisest and best of us, are poor, blind, short-sighted creatures; and, since the fall, see through a glass darkly. To err is human; it is natural, nay, it is unavoidable in our present state;—to be charitable in our judgment of others is godlike and commendable. Always remembering,

bering, that *with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged, and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.*

When the word of God positively determines any point, and condemns and forbids any practice; then to condemn and prohibit is so far from being unchristian, that it becomes our bounden duty: we are expressly commanded of God *to rebuke our neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*

Now the word of God has explicitly and intelligibly declared, that *to avoid fornication*, says the Apostle, *let every man have his own wife* (not wives); *and every woman her own husband* (not husbands); and the same Apostle tells us, that *a bishop must be the husband of one wife.* And is this the doctrine taught in the Old Testament, by God the Father; and in the New, by God the Son, and his holy Apostles? It surely is: if so, *let God be true, and every man a liar.* In this case it cannot possibly be worth either your while or mine to bestow even a single hour in examining an hypothesis which is so clearly repugnant to God's holy word: and I would say to you
respecting

respecting Mr. M's book, what the Apostle has said on another occasion, *touch not, taste not, handle not*. Vain man, alas, would be wise, though he be born like the wild ass's colt: But the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God: It shall vanish away, and be brought to nothing, but the counsel, and word of the Lord, that shall stand, *firm as the rock of ages*, and endure for ever and ever. Indeed, it evidently appears, from a great variety of arguments, that the Almighty never intended that any one man should ever have more than one wife at one and the same time. The original institution of marriage clearly shews this, (as I have already proved) in the first instance. They *twain*, says our God and Saviour, shall be one flesh. Not they three, or more, shall be one flesh; but (mark the words) *they twain*, to shew that God intended that *one man* should have only *one wife*. This is certain that twain are, and twain will be still twain, though the learned (with jesuitical sophistry) should dispute against this *plain truth* for twenty years, and their defenders for twenty more.

We

We are informed in scripture, that *Polygamy* was introduced into the world by a vile murderer, whose name was *Lamech*. He was a descendant of that monster of iniquity, wicked *Cain*, who slew his righteous brother *Abel*. A wicked son, from a wicked progenitor. Unrighteous parents, have generally ungodly children. Corruption is sure to run in the blood, though grace does not. *Lamech* seems even to have exceeded *Cain* in iniquity. The former was only a murderer; but the latter was a murderer, and a *Polygamist* too: For, the sacred historian informs us, that he took unto him *two wives*; the name of the one was *Adah*, and the name of the other *Zillah*. *And Lamech said unto his wives, Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; for, I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged seven fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold.** He was the first who had transgressed the divine institution respecting marriage. He, as it seems, began the

* Genesis iv. 19, 23, 24.

vile custom; but better men afterwards followed his wicked example.

How hard is it, when custom has established sin into a law, to escape from the pollutions that are in the world? We hence learn too, the imperiousness of *Lamech* towards his wives. His wives hear his voice, and tremble. They who marry, like *Lamech*, for lust, will seldom long speak kindly to their partners.—We have here too, a proof of the ferocity of his disposition. *I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.* That is, I have done it, nor do I fear the consequences; or, as it is in the margin of our Bibles, *I would slay a man that dared to provoke me, or stand in my way, though I were wounded in the conflict.* Bloody-minded men stick at nothing; when their passions hurry them on, they neither fear God, nor regard men.

The accursed sin of duelling, is, (as an able writer well observes) the true spirit of blood-thirsty *Lamech*.—We may further note from the word of God, *Lamech's* presumptuous impiety. *If Cain be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold.* From Cain's protection

protection, he wickedly infers his own security, let him commit what crimes he would. Thus wicked men wax worse and worse : because God's vengeance is not speedily executed, they harden themselves in the confidence of impunity ; but, be it remembered always, that tho' vengeance be slow, it is nevertheless sure ; their damnation slumbereth not.

I have dwelt the longer on the temper and character of *Lamech*, because I wish to present you with a clear and full view of his exceeding great impiety. He was, you see, a murderer, and a *Polygamist*, an imperious husband, and an hardened profligate. Such was the wretch, who wickedly forsook, and wantonly broke in upon the sacred institution of God, in marriage, and instituted the damnable doctrine of a plurality of wives ; and in this view of things, how odious and detestable does the doctrine of *Polygamy* appear ? The devil, who delights in impurity, first put the thought into *Lamech's* head ; and vile, accursed *Lamech*, lost to all sense, both of duty or shame, immediately puts in practice, that execrable scheme, which Satan had suggested.

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And if this be a fair representation of the case, (which I am persuaded it is) is it not astonishing that any private christian, and much more so, that any christian minister should ever appear as an open advocate for such an infernal doctrine? Such it really is, which will evidently appear now I proceed to consider its dreadful, and ruinous consequences to society.

You have already seen that *Polygamy* is directly opposite to the revealed will of God. There is not a single passage in the Old Testament, which either enjoins, or commends it; there is not a single passage in the New Testament, which allows, or approves it; on the contrary, there are very many texts in the Bible, which clearly, and absolutely condemn it. If God would neither ordain, nor allow *Polygamy*, even in the first instance, when we may reasonably suppose, that the peopling of the world was an object in the divine contemplation; it is surely most absurd to imagine that he now views it with a more favourable eye. It is owned indeed, that God may have permitted *Polygamy*, under the
Mosaic

Mosaic institution, but this is no proof that he ever approved it. He is pleased to permit many things in the present day, namely, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, &c. &c. which are in the greatest degree, offensive to his immaculate purity.

The reasons why, we cannot explain fully now but we shall know hereafter. To permit, is one thing; to approve, another. — *The times of ignorance, God winked at, but now, in the gospel day, he commandeth all men, every where to repent.* The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, what? Not to indulge, observe, but to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. This indeed, is our highest wisdom, as well as our bounden duty. In serving, and glorifying God, we take the only sure and certain method most effectually to serve ourselves, and to promote both our present peace, and eternal happiness. Let us all therefore restrain, and keep ourselves within the bounds of lawful marriage: *Adam* did so, before the flood, and righteous *Noah*,

and his sons after it ; and this too, was the case with most of the antient worthies, whose names are recorded in the Old Testament.

Polygamy was not universally, nor even generally practised by the Patriarchs. *Abraham* complied with it, at the request of his wife ; and not from inclination ; but the domestic uneasiness, which ensued when *Agar* behaved in an insolent, unseemly manner, to her mistress, *Sarah*, caused him, most probably, to repent of his compliance.

Isaac continued faithful to his *Rebecca* ; nor do we read, that he violated his marriage-vow. And in this, he has surely left us a worthy example to copy after. He was famous for his affection, and conjugal chastity ; marrying but one wife, and living faithfully with her, even when (by the wicked custom of the time) he might have had more. But he, like a wise and good man, adhered closely to the original and divine institution, and clave to his lawful wife.

Jacob, indeed, had two wives ; but (as *Jerom* observes) he married them among the *Assyrians*, where the *Gentiles* might think it

no sin; nor did *Jacob*, in the first instance, either desire, or design to have had any more than one wife, namely, *Rachel*. *Laban*, his father-in-law, did most grossly deceive him, by imposing upon him, from lucrative motives, his elder daughter, *Leah*, instead of *Rachel*. The deceit was soon discovered by *Jacob*; and he expostulated with *Laban*, on the injustice of his proceedings. *Laban*, makes a trifling, frivolous excuse, in his own vindication; and then, *Jacob* agrees to serve *Laban* seven years more, to obtain his beloved *Rachel*. So great was his affection for her, that the years of his servitude seemed to him but as a few days. In the day, the drought consumed him; and the frost, by night; and sleep departed from his eyes. *Jacob*, was twenty years in *Laban's* service; fourteen years he served for *Laban's* two daughters, and six years for his cattle; and *Laban* changed his wages ten times. He was a cruel master, a very dishonest and deceitful man; yet *Jacob*, willingly and cheerfully submitted to all, for the sake of his beloved *Rachel*. We hence learn, that love
will

will make the heaviest burdens fit light, and reconcile the lover to the greatest difficulties. You see then, that bigamy, was at first, rather *Jacob's* misfortune, than his fault.—The deception which was put upon him by *Laban*, paved the way for it; and his strong attachment to *Rachel*, induced him to comply with a corrupt custom, which, in his better judgment, he must surely condemn. He knew full well, that in taking *Rachel*, after he had married her elder sister, that he was breaking in upon the divine institution, and became a transgressor of the divine law. And yet such was the force of passion, that even *Jacob*, who was, in many other respects, a pious, valuable, and good man, is led by his appetite, rather than the holy law of his God: a pitiable instance this of human frailty; shewing us clearly, that the best of men are *but men*; and therefore liable to sin, error, and fallibility.

Adam kept to his *Eve*, and when the world was repopled after the flood, it became so by a single marriage: *Noah* had but one wife, and his sons had each of them but
one

one wife.* Yea, the very beasts were ordered by God, to go into the ark *by pairs*,† to teach man, as it were, that God approved not *promiscuous mixtures*.

To these observations, I might deduce many more from scripture, respecting the *indefensibility of Polygamy*; but the present opportunity will not permit me to enlarge.—What has been already advanced is, I trust, fully sufficient to convince you, that *Polygamy*, is totally repugnant to the original institution of marriage, appointed by God himself; and, I shall now beg leave further to remark, that it is as totally opposite to the laws of our country. Indeed, it is the duty, and interest of the legislature, in every christian and well-regulated state, totally to discountenance and prohibit the *vile, accursed practice of Polygamy*. Religion, reason, and sound policy, all unite in this requisition.—Religion, abhors it; reason, condemns it; and, sound policy, forbids it.

In our own nation, it is wisely enacted, that no man shall have more than one wife,

* Genesis vii. 7, compared with 1. Peter iii. 29.

† Genesis vi. 19.

at one and the same time; and the law most justly punisheth so great a violation of the divine institution, with *death*. This penalty, the legislature threatens, in order that it's terror may strike those, who are *too hardened* to be wrought upon, either by scripture, or reason. Indeed, rulers are, and rulers ought ever to be a terror to such vile, and wicked works. *They bear not the sword in vain. They are the ministers of God; revengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*†

I proceed now to prove, 2dly.—That the consequences of *Polygamy*, are dreadful, and ruinous to society. Indeed, the inconveniences and evils attendant on *Polygamy*, are innumerable; so endless are they, that I am rather at a loss, where to begin or end the account.—Hence proceeds perpetual envy, which is the canker of the soul; jealousy, which is a most dangerous, and fatal passion; together with strife, malice, and murder; and where envying and strife are, there is

† Romans xiii. 4, 5.

confusion,

confusion, and every evil work. This must always be the case among a plurality of wives: One and the same house can never *peaceably* contain a variety of women, each of whom, thinks she has an undoubted right both to the person, and property of the husband. This consideration, induced one of the heathen law-givers, who permitted *Polygamy*, not to allow any man to marry two wives, except he had two several houses to keep them asunder; and the patriarch *Jacob*, probably for this reason, had a particular tent for every one of his four wives.* To this may be added, the dreadful contentions, which necessarily arise between the offspring of the different wives, thro' an interference of interest; the feuds, and factions, occasioned thereby, and the injury to those children, whose mother was not living to plead for them. Hence likewise, would follow the dissipation of the greatest estates, and destruction of antient families, by making provision for so many branches. Hence too, would arise great injustice to ladies of superior birth and fortune, to have mean wo-

* Genesis xxxi. 33,

men taken in to be their equals, perhaps, thro' the partiality of the husband, their superiors. Hence true affection would be banished from the world, which can never be hearty or sincere, if divided between a variety of objects. Hence many more children would be brought into the world, than their parents could maintain, educate and provide for. But I need not enlarge in so plain a case; if *Polygamy* prevail, which God forbid! we may bid a final adieu to all order and decency, and prepare for, and expect confusion, and every evil work.* There

* The mischievous consequences of Mr. M's late publication, has been (as we are credibly informed) already felt, in one of the most capital trading towns in this kingdom. The minister of a certain chapel in the town, who is a faithful preacher, of exemplary life and conversation, employed (as his chapel clerk) a certain married man, who was generally looked upon, as serious, and well disposed. However about twelve months ago, a letter was found, wrote by the said clerk, implying a desire to form a criminal connection with a young woman, who came steadily to attend public worship at the said chapel. When a discovery was made of this vile design, the minister, chapel-wardens, and many respectable gentlemen, summoned the culprit to appear before them. He came with very apparent marks of shame and sorrow; he confessed his guilt, and appeared to be much humbled; he entreated God to forgive his vile intention; and begged of his judges to forgive him too. He freely owned the criminality of his design, and seemed deeply to bewail the reproach he had

There arose in the sixteenth century (as history informs us) a number of *Polygamists*,

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who

brought on the gospel, and the occasion which he had given to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. His judges were struck with the humility of his deportment. Instead of proceeding to immediate expulsion, (which was originally intended, on a supposition that his guilt appeared) they relented: They believed his repentance to be sincere; supposed he was then actuated by a godly sorrow, and therefore, instead of sharp upbraidings, (which the odious nature of his offence so justly required) they pitied him; they forgave him; and (on a promise of reformation in life and manners) they agreed to let him continue in his office. In a few months after this transaction, lo! *Thelyphthora* appears! The minister of the said chapel, whose conduct has always been marked (till the present unhappy exception occurred) with steadiness, and prudence, reads, and alas! to the great astonishment of all his acquaintance, expresses his approbation of *Thelyphthora*! Nay, he not only tacitly approves, but incautiously, unadvisedly, and rashly appears as its *open defender*. He writes circular letters to his friends, expresses his entire approbation of the performance, and says Mr. Madan's scheme is "divinely calculated to save thousands of his fellow-creatures from ruin." Impressed with these ideas in his own mind, respecting *Thelyphthora*, he very incautiously (to say no worse) lends it to his said chapel-clerk. The man is struck with the novelty of the performance, and is much prepossessed in its favor, by the high encomiums passed on it by his master; he is astonished at the learning, and ingenuity of the author; he is quite in raptures to find his villainous design so ably maintained and defended; and resolves to renew his infamous attack on the same young woman, who had long been, it seems, the object of his lust. In consequence of this impious resolve, he again writes to the young woman, urges in a pressing manner the *legality* of his

who waged war with custom, and burst through the prescriptions of authority.—

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his design, and appeals to the scriptures (as interpreted, or rather dreadfully perverted in the present case by Mr. *Madan*) to justify his most impious, and infamous design. In short he had managed his matters so artfully, that he was on the point of completing the ruin of this thoughtless and unwary young creature, when, lo! his iniquitous and infernal scheme is again providentially discovered. He is again summoned to appear in the chapel, before his former judges, to which were added a considerable number of very respectable divines. The culprit again appears, but, his conduct is totally different. Instead of expressing, as formerly, any godly sorrow, self-loathing, and self-abasement, he now, with a brazen brow, steeled with uncommon impudence, stands forth in his own defence. He even dares to vindicate his conduct, on the ground of Mr. *Madan's* arguments; says, that he has done nothing amiss in this matter; that he has a *right by the laws of God to have the woman*, and that *she is an adulteress if married to another*. What an hardened wretch! His judges were both amazed, and shocked at his effrontery; and with the greatest propriety immediately dismissed him from his office.

See here then a proof, too plain and evident, of the dangerous tendency, and pernicious effects of *Thelyphthora*. It is much to be feared that we shall soon hear of more such instances, unless peradventure it shall please our God speedily to open the eyes of Mr. M. and his *defenders*, and give them grace to retract what they have written. God grant this may speedily be the case. It is really awful to think that two eminent ministers of the gospel should have been permitted to fall so deeply into the snare of Satan, as to stand forth openly in the defence of a scheme, totally repugnant to all law whether divine or human; yet so it is, and that so it is, is, I say, a just ground for our concern and pity; but
let

They were followers of one *Bernardinus Ochinus* ; * and held it was lawful for a man to have

let us not stop here ; let us not only pity, but pray fervently for them too ; that they may speedily be convinced of the evil tendency of their writings, in attempting to defend *Polygamy*, and that they may very soon, and loudly recant.— This is the only, and indeed the best thing they can possibly do, as matters now stand ; I pray God they may both do it, speedily, and heartily too. The cause they are engaged in, is both *weak*, and *wicked*, it is totally unsupported by the word of God, and clearly repugnant to it.

* This truly learned and most ingenious man was General of the Order of Capucins : an eloquent and distinguished preacher ; and much courted and caressed by the Great on account of his extraordinary accomplishments. At the Reformation he joined the Protestants, and left Italy, with Peter Martyr, about the year 1543. He assumed a secular habit, and married a lady of *Lucca*. The connection, it is said, proved unfortunate ; and it was supposed, by some, that he wrote in vindication of polygamy, in consequence of the disappointment and mortification which he received from the gallantries of his wife. The severe Doctors of the Helvetic church never made *charity* a fundamental article of their creed : and without sympathising with his misfortunes, they proceeded to damn his principles. They were not accustomed to seek for candid apologies in the infirmities of age, or the chagrin which ariseth from ill treatment ; but finding him in an error, they applied the *common* argument of bitter zeal to correct it. The method they took with poor Ochinus was short, but irresistible ; for they banished him at once from their Church and State, as the best method to preserve the peace and purity of both. The Socinian Church in Poland being at that time a kind of common reservoir of heresy, opened its wide gate to our fugitive, and afforded him some little protection from bigotted inquisition. But as one
error

have as many wives as he pleased. What pity is it that men of distinguished abilities, piety, and usefulness, whose praise is, and whose praise has been so long in the gospel, should join hands with these infamous *Polygamists* and heretics, and appear as open advocates for their execrable tenets. How are the mighty fallen! How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed! Lord teach us to cease from men, and to look more to thee, and to thee only, for wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption! Indeed we cannot put too little trust in men, nor too great confidence in our great God

error frequently generates another, this learned man became obnoxious to the *Polonian brethren*; and at last sunk into a species of heresy which the charity of Socinianism itself could not tolerate.

Maldonatus attempts, in his Comment. on Matth. xix. to throw some obloquy upon the Calvinists, because one of their sect had publicly vindicated the practice of *Polygamy*. *Rivet* (professor of divinity at *Poitiers*, in 1633) spiritedly combats the reflection of the insidious Jesuit, and observes — "*Scimus fuisse excuculatum Capucinum qui ex Papisino ad nos transit et ad Samofatenianos deficit, qui, tales Dialogos conscripsit, quales se vidisse profitetur Maldonatus. Is fuit Bernard. Ochinus qui a nullis durius fuit exceptus quam a nostris.*" Exercit. in Genesin, pag. 130.

N. B. Ochinus's Dialogues on Polygamy were answered by Theodore Beza.—See Monthly Review for November.

and

and Saviour. || They who cease from man, to rely wholly upon God, will surely find a firm rock, instead of a weak and bruised reed.

I proceed now 3dly, to prove that it is the bounden duty of every christian to abhor and oppose such a licentious tenet as *Polygamy*.

You have already seen that the vile practice is contrary to the divine institution of marriage, which expressly says, *they twain shall be one flesh*: It is contrary too to the laws of our own country, which forbid this accursed practice under the penalty of death. It is replete with evils of every kind; it is clearly contrary to our baptismal vow, which enjoins us to renounce, not to indulge, all the sinful lusts of the flesh: It is inconsistent with the purity of our most holy religion, and destructive of all vital piety. In short, it is offensive to God, hateful to all truly serious persons, destructive to society, and ruinous to immortal souls. Fly therefore from this accursed practice, as from the face of a serpent. If once you should be intangled in
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this infernal scheme, you will surely find; and alas! too late, that you have offended God, brought dishonour to Christ, grieved the holy Spirit, and pierced yourselves thro' with many sorrows. Be wise therefore in time, behold you are warned; *flee from the wrath to come.* If you would flee from wrath, you must resolve, by the help of God, studiously to flee from sin. Sin is a transgression of the law, and makes us subject to the curse.* Sin is the accursed thing which God hateth; its wages is death; death spiritual, death temporal, and death eternal. *The wages of sin, of every sin, is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh, or can come, unto the Father but by him.* Let us utterly renounce, detest, and abhor all self-righteous dependencies; and let us look simply and solely to the Lord Jesus Christ, with an eye of faith, that we may be saved. Blessed be God! he is both able and willing to save to the uttermost, all those that come unto God by him.

* Galatians iii. 10.

His wisdom will teach us, his word will direct us, his spirit will quicken us, his power will protect us, and his mercy will save us.

May we all be enabled to love this precious Saviour more, and serve him better! He is fairer than the children of men; he is fairest among ten thousand; he is altogether lovely.

And what shall I say more? I will close his divine character, and this present discourse, in the words of the evangelical prophet Isaiah: *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.**

* Isaiah ix. 6.

His will will soon be, His word will
Just as the light will quicken and his
will growb us, and his mercy will

It may be all the trouble as long as this precious
humanity moves and lives - man better than the
is kinder than the children of men; he is
cannot argue and think; he is like a

And what shall I say more? I will not
believe that you, and this great city, will

the words of the evangelist, "but I will be in the world a little longer, and then I will go to my Father, who is a Father of the living, and not of the dead."

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Polygamy indefensible.

S E R M O N II.

GENESIS, Chap. II. Ver. 24.

*Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother,
and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall
be one flesh.*

IN a former discourse on these words,
I trust, I have clearly proved, the three
following points of doctrine.—1st. That
Polygamy, is contrary to the laws both of
God and man. 2^{dly}. That it's consequences
are dreadful, and ruinous to society. And,
3^{dly}. That it is the bounden duty of every
christian, to abhor, oppose, and reject such
licentious, and damnable doctrine. As I have
already adduced many arguments to shew
the dangerous and fatal tendency of *The-*
lyphthora; I shall now beg leave to make a
few remarks, concerning some other gross
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mistakes, which Mr. *Madan* has made in this dangerous publication.

This writer takes much pains to depreciate the outward forms of marriage, and would make his readers believe, that they are the superfluous ordinances of human policy.—Here, indeed, he is much mistaken. It is certain, that the saints under the Old Testament, had some forms, respecting the nuptial ceremony, which they deemed essential to an honorable alliance.* The case of *Dinah*, *Jacob's* daughter, clearly proves this, as a certain *Reviewer* † sensibly remarks.—According to Mr. *M's* hypothesis, she was actually married to the prince of *Shechem*. But, the scripture expressly says, that he took, and lay with her, and defiled her.—It was after this act, that he said to his father, *Get me this damsel to wife.* ‡—It is evident, from the chapter where this circumstance is related, that her brethren's rage was excited, because they considered the connection, not so much unlawful, on account

* Compare *Ruth* iv. 10, with *Tobit* vii. 13, 14.

† See *Monthly Review*, for October last.

‡ See *Genesis* xxiv.

of the uncircumcision of the prince, as criminal, and scandalous; because it had taken place without those *previous forms and stipulations, that were judged necessary to ratify a legal marriage*. This is evident, from the reply they made to their father, *Jacob*, after he had expostulated with them for their cruelty towards the Shechemites. *Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?* That is, Should her person be used as an harlot's is wont to be, without those previous requisites which are deemed necessary to credit and sanctify the act? A certain divine, is totally silent about this said case of *Dinah*; and for what reason?—Is it not because it militates so strongly, so insuperably, against his favorite tenet, which is, that a carnal union of the sexes, is all that is necessary to constitute the validity of marriage?

I shall not enlarge on this point, but shall proceed further to observe, that the same author insinuates a wish (and a most cruel one it is), that all refractory, and disobedient wives, might be immediately dismissed, and put away. He quotes a case, which you may

may find recorded in the first chapter of the book of *Esther*, where you find that King *Ahasuerus* did (by the advice of his princes) immediately divorce *Vashti*, his queen, for refusing to make her appearance, in all her grandeur, before him and his nobles, when sent for. But how inhuman and unchristian would such a practice be! We should rather pity the weakness, and condescend to the infirmities of the fair sex; and we should endeavour to mollify their tempers; to draw them with the cords of love, rather than drive them from us with merciless rage, and unrelenting fury.—Men have their foibles, faults, and failings, as well as the female sex. A deep and due sense of this, should induce us to put the best and most favorable construction on the conduct of our wives; and to soften them down by a tender, gentle, and obliging deportment. This will be the most likely and prudent method we can take to promote our own peace, and to induce their obedience to all our reasonable, and lawful commands. An imperious behaviour to a defenceless woman, is both unchristian, and cruel.

cruel.—Women are supposed to unite themselves unto us, for defence and protection. How cruel, how ungenerous is it then, to assume *the tyrant* instead of *the friend*, and to harass and perplex, instead of loving and comforting, of honoring and cherishing our lawful partners? All such barbarous wretches, are indeed, a reproach to human nature, and totally unworthy even of the christian name. The Apostle teaches all husbands to *love their wives*, and not to be *bitter against them*. And sure I am, that if we disobey this injunction, we shall offend that gracious and good God, who himself instituted marriage, to promote the real happiness and comfort of mankind.

The kind and benevolent Author of our being, who perfectly knows what is in all the sons of men, says, *It is not good for man to be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* He did so. And, shall man be so ungrateful to the gracious giver, as to abuse and evil intreat this *last, best gift to men*? God forbid! Rather let us all, who have entered into this tender, solemn, and affectionate engagement,
 pray

pray to God for grace, that we may be truly thankful for the blessing of a prudent and discreet wife ; and do all in our power to promote the happiness and comfort of our partners, both here, and hereafter. Lost to all the fine feelings of our nature, must that man be, who can treat with the least degree of inhumanity, the wife of his bosom : he justly merits the contempt of all sensible, serious, and judicious persons, and should be regarded as a monster of ingratitude ; in short, he is ungrateful to his God, as well as cruel to his partner. Marriage was instituted for the society, help, and comfort which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity, and adversity. This consideration evidently lays both parties under a mutual obligation to endeavor, to promote each others happiness, in every lawful and proper way. Women are formed with a natural tenderness, which makes them susceptible of the finest feelings. How must the honor, and delicacy of the sex then be injured by such a dangerous publication as *Thelyphthora*, in which they are placed in the *degrading light*, of a kind of upper servants,

servants, instead of the faithful partners of our joys, and cares; nay further, they are sunk even below the level of our friendship, and are considered only as objects formed for purposes, the most sordid. *O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Ascalon*, that ever any christian minister should so be be-fool'd by Satan, as thus to degrade and undervalue the most beautiful, as well as the most valuable of the creation. I verily believe that there are many, very many more good, and godly women in the world, than men; the modesty of their sex, and the nature of their education, do, under the influence of divine grace, effectually guard them against many gross, and scandalous vices, which dreadfully prevail among men. I am sorry there are any exceptions from this general good character, which, I hope, does belong to the female sex; but alas! it is feared there are many: however, let us not be too severe, but rather let us pity, and pray for them, that God would give them repentance unto life; enable them to see their sin and danger, and to seek after Christ before it be too late; always remem-

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bring that those abandoned, and unhappy females may date their misery, and ruin, from their acquaintance with wicked, and abandoned men: but in order to avoid all illicit, and scandalous commerce between the sexes, (which can produce nothing but misery and disgrace even here, and without faith, and repentance, damnation hereafter,) let every man have his own wife, *not wives*; and every woman her own husband, *not husbands*. *Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.* “Tho’ man was possessed of all the blifs of Paradise, as a learned and pious writer observes, one thing was still lacking to his felicity. He was alone, nor could he, amidst the various orders of creatures, find any like unto himself; angels are rational spirits, but incorporeal; beasts corporeal, but irrational; God saw, and God pitied him. With the affection of a kind father, unsolicited, he consulted his necessities, and resolves to supply him with an help meet for him, of his own species.”* Solitude is not suited for man, even in his state of innocence, society was needful; good company is still not only a great

* See Mr. *Hawes's* Comment. on Genesis ii. 24.

means of our comfort, but a great help to our edification ; a single life wants many advantages, that can only be enjoyed by a suitable help-meet.

Celibacy was never an ordinance of God : He who made man, knew what was best for him. God's glory required that he should not be alone ; the earth could not thus be replenished, nor the blessing pronounced, be effectual. In the choice of a wife then, a help-meet is to be sought ; a companion and friend, whose presence at home may be more to us than the whole world besides.

Man was created first, and afterwards woman ; they are two indeed in person, but are made one by the union of marriage. Man is but half himself, without his partner, woman. From this original pair have the numerous generations of men descended that have overspread the earth. How foolish, how vain then, is the pride of pedigree ; when the beggar on the dunghill can claim the most *antient* and *ennobled* extraction, as the *son of Adam, who was the Son of God*. We have in the literal sense, one father ; we are brethren.

thren of one family ; the same blood runs in our veins ; and therefore brotherly affections should be always in our hearts, one towards another. May we all practise this great duty of charity, and love one another out of a pure heart, *fervently !*

“ As *Adam* was created prior to *Eve*, so he hath in all things the pre-eminence ; nor was he made for the woman, but the woman for the man. And here I would observe, that those women have read their bible to little purpose, who have not yet learned to reverence and obey their husbands. The woman was made of a rib of *Adam*, while he slept : She was taken, says a pious writer, not from his head, *to usurp authority over him ;* nor out of his feet, *to be trampled upon ;* but out of his side, to be regarded as next himself : She was moreover taken from under his arm, to be, as it were protected ; and from a part near his heart, to be beloved and cherished by him. The creation of *Eve* was the immediate work of God. He caused a deep sleep to fall upon *Adam* ; he opened his side, and closed it up again. It had been a
painful

painful operation when waking; but now, the pain is neither felt, nor the rib wanted. As soon as she is created God brings her to the man." This occurrence is most beautifully described by the Prince of English poets, the incomparable *Milton*. The passage I mean is so very pathetic and elegant, that I must beg leave to introduce it: If you find but half the pleasure in hearing it, which I have frequently done in reading it, I am sure you will not be displeased with the liberty I am now about to take.

In the 8th book of *Paradise lost*, *Adam* relates to the angel *Raphael* what he remembered since his own creation. He here gives him a most pleasing account of his being placed in *Paradise*; of his talk with God concerning the inconveniences arising from solitude, and expresses his desire of having a suitable companion. He then describes his first meeting, and nuptials with *Eve*, in the following most beautiful manner:

Behold her! not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
With what all earth or Heaven could bestow
To make her amiable:—On she came,

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Led by her heav'nly Maker, tho' unseen,
 And guided by his voice, nor uninform'd
 Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites :
 Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her eye,
 In ev'ry gesture, dignity and love.—

—I overjoy'd could not forbear aloud.

This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill'd
 Thy works, Creator bounteous and benign,
 Giver of all things fair, but fairest this
 Of all thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see
 Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
 Before me; woman is her name, of men
 Extracted; for this cause he shall forego
 Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
 And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.

God had provided *Eve* for the comfort of
Adam, and therefore he brought her unto him,
 and presented her as his wife. When a wife
 is of God's making by the donation of his
 special grace, and of God's bringing, by his
 special providence; such a one is indeed like-
 ly to prove a help-meet for a man. *Adam*
 gave his *Eve* a most tender, and affectionate
 reception; this is now, says he, *bone of my*
bone, and flesh of my flesh; every husband is
 obliged to regard his wife as his own flesh,
 and to nourish, and cherish her with the most
 tender endearment.

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Our progenitor *Adam*, called his *Eve*, woman, because she was taken out of man. This, he did in token, not only of her subjection, but of her nearness to himself; tho' she differed in sex, yet she was the same in nature with himself by an union, which no ties, nor authority, must separate; indeed marriage is indissoluble till death. There is but one allowed cause of divorce, namely, adultery.

Where a connection must be so lasting, with what seriousness and care, with what thoughtfulness and circumspection, ought it to be entered upon? And for want of this seriousness and care, thoughtfulness and application for the divine blessing, how many unhappy marriages have we now among us? Marriage is then, as you have seen, a divine institution, which took place even in *Paradise* itself: It is no doubt lawful therefore for all christians; even for those who are made perfect in holiness, through the faith of Jesus Christ. But let all men be cautious how they enter into this most solemn and sacred engagement.

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The reason why we have so many unhappy marriages in the world, is briefly this: The parties concerned do not invite the Lord Jesus Christ to the wedding; that is, they do not call upon him in humble and earnest prayer for his blessing and direction, nor ask the advice of his disciples. Alas! Christ and religion are now little thought of in the generality of weddings: What wonder is it then, says a pious writer, if matches of the Devil's making (as all such are which are contracted *only* on account of outward beauty, or filthy lucre's sake) prove most miserable (as they daily do) and grievous to be borne. Indeed the Devil cannot lay a greater snare for young christians than to tempt them to yoke themselves unequally with unbelievers. Such unbelievers all most assuredly are who are not born again of water and of the Spirit of God. This was the snare wherein the sons of God were entangled before the flood, and one great cause why the Almighty brought that flood upon the earth.

The sacred historian informs us (in the sixth chapter of Genesis) that *the sons of*
God

God (the posterity of pious *Seth*) saw the daughters of men (or the posterity of wicked *Cain*,) that they were fair, (not that they were pious) and they took them wives of all that they chose, not which God chose for them. What follows? And the Lord said my spirit shall not always strive with men, for that he also is flesh; that is, even the few righteous souls being now grown carnal by their ungodly marriages, the whole world was altogether become abominable, and had made themselves vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction. Behold here the dire cause of men's apostacy from God! A bad woman, armed with beauty, is one of the most deadly instruments the Devil can employ against the sons of God.

A christian man or woman should dread as much to be yoked with an unbeliever, as a living body to be tied for life to a dead corpse; the one can communicate contagion, but the other cannot enliven a soul dead in trespasses and sins. The marriage contract therefore ought not to be undertaken unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts

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that have no understanding; but rather (as our most excellent church teaches) “reverently, discreetly, soberly, advisedly, and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained. It was ordained for the peopling of the world, and that children might be brought up in the fear, and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy name. It was ordained likewise for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, that such persons as have not the gift of continency, might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body. And, lastly, it was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, which the one ought to have of the other both in prosperity, and adversity.”

Whenever any of you therefore intend or design to enter into the holy estate of matrimony; I entreat you to keep these ends always in view, and then you may rest assured that this sacred institution will indeed prove a blessing and a comfort to you.—It is now time to hasten to a conclusion; but before I do so, I shall beg leave to remind you that the marriage state (which is so honorable

able in all) signifies unto us the mystical union that is betwixt the Lord Jesus Christ and his church. This indeed is the most important point of view in which we can possibly behold it. The sacred oracles speak plainly and fully on this mystical union; may we all know by happy experience what these scriptures mean.

The prophet speaking to the church of Christ, says, *Thy Maker is thy husband*; and the Redeemer gives to every true believer this most comfortable assurance, *I will betroth thee to me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.* * The endearing relation which God is here pleased to assume, as the husband of his people, should engage our warmest affection, and most unshaken fidelity. *I will betroth thee to me for ever*: These words may refer to the Jews in particular, who, at last, shall be brought into the visible church of the redeemed; or, they may be applied to every particular believer, whether Jew or

* Hosea ii. 19, 20.

Gentile. For it may be truly said of all the sons of fallen *Adam*, *Ye have not chosen Christ, but he has chosen you* : And by his grace, he enables and engages all his people to choose him, as their Lord and husband, and to cleave to him in love, and faithfulness.— And blessed be God ! this endeared relation shall subsist for ever. The gifts and callings of God, are without repentance ; God's people can never be cast away, for this plain and invincible reason ;—Because God cannot change. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; and this divine Redeemer has condescended so far as to give this most comfortable assurance, even to the weakest of those who truly believe in him, *None shall pluck them out of my hand. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* The Redeemer further assures his church, that he will betroth it unto himself in righteousness, dealing with believers in the most assured sincerity, and adorning them with the spotless robe of his own all-perfect righteousness, which he, their Redeemer, has wrought out for them, as their wedding-garment. Arrayed in this royal robe, they are all fair in
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the eyes of an all-righteous and just God; and that, in such a way as is most perfectly consistent with his justice: For, as Christ has paid the penalty which was due to God's holy law, on account of man's disobedience, so God may now be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Tho' the best of men are, in themselves *miserable sinners*, vile and polluted; and deserve God's wrath, instead of his love; yet (most astonishing to think) the Almighty expressly promises in this inestimable portion of scripture, that he will betroth his people to him for ever, not only in righteousness and judgment, but likewise in loving-kindness, in mercies, and in faithfulness. Believers therefore may always depend on sharing the loving-kindness and tender regard of the Lord Jesus Christ.—He feeds his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs with his arm; he carries them in his bosom; puts them next his heart; and gently leads those that are with young. This divine Saviour betroths his people to him not only in loving-kindness, but in mercies too: He bestows on them every blessing which their sinful souls can

can need : and all these innumerable mercies purely flow, not from the least merit in them, but purely and solely from his free and undeserved favor. And to crown the whole, the Redeemer here promises that he will betroth his people to him not only in mercies, but in faithfulness too ; and that they shall all of them know the Lord, from the greatest even unto the least of his people. He stands engaged to his people to fulfil every promise of the covenant to them. They shall surely know, and be united unto the Lord Jesus Christ : From the greatest even to the least of them shall know, by happy heart-felt experience, the love and power, the glory and excellency, of their God and Saviour. Such a knowledge have they as effectually engages their love and duty to him, and such as will create in them a meetness for eternal glory. Blessed and happy are all they who stedfastly in their hearts, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, unto righteousness ; and who do, in consequence of the life, and power of their faith, make a confession with their mouth of this glorious and divine Redeemer, unto salvation. May we all be in the happy number !

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It would take up too much time at present to recite and explain all the passages, which occur in both Testaments, which bear an allusion to the cordial and perfect communion which subsists between Christ and his people from the institution of marriage. It seems a favourite, because the tenderest idea to represent the intimate love and grace of our redeeming God.

It is remarked by a learned, judicious, and pious writer,* that the book of Solomon's Song carries this allegory throughout; and those who have read their bibles but little, must know, that it is a sacred image, used to illustrate the highest privilege, and the most intimate access of the believer to his Lord. Some particular texts of this kind I shall now refer to.†

And how should it affect us with wonder and delight, with astonishment and joy, when we consider, that Christ is ours, and that we are his in the bonds of an everlasting covenant?—That such fallen, weak, and foolish creatures as we are, should be so intimately

* See *Horæ Solitariae*, p. 357, 359, &c.

† See Jer. iii. 14, 31, 32. Rom. vii. 4. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Eph. v. 30, 31, 32: Rev. xxi. 2.

related

related to the holy Savior, as to become members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones ; that, I say, would surpass the very belief of angels, who see most of the benignity of their Maker, if God himself had not declared it ! Upon the foundation of such love to us, how ought we to love him again ; and to shew the cordiality of our attachment, *not only with our lips, but likewise in our lives, by giving up ourselves to his service, and by walking before him in holiness and righteousness, all our days !* May all they that name the name of Christ, be studious by the help of God's grace, not only to depart from iniquity, but to do all with a single eye to God's glory ! Christ is all, and in all ; let us fervently pray for grace, that we may love him more, and serve him better, and chearfully devote our lips, our lives, our time, *our all*, to him.— They who know most of Christ, will surely love him most, and will be most ready to confess, that they cannot love him enough after all. Blessed be God, his mercy doth not depend upon their love to him, which alas ! is full of frailty and imperfection ; but upon his own love to them, which is perfect and

and immutable. Here is the Christian's security, and here he may safely rest his hopes for life eternal.

To conclude.—It is now meet and right, and my bounden duty, as a minister of the gospel, to call your attention from mortal men, mortal women, and mortal things, to that most weighty and solemn charge, which the great Apostle gives you.—*Brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away.** We learn clearly from this important admonition, that time in general, and our own time in particular, is *very short*; eternity is advancing swiftly; and the days which are here allotted us, draw a-pace to their appointed end.

Since therefore, our great concern in this world, is to prepare for a better, *it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none*, not setting their affections inordi-

* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31.

nately on a dying world, or retarded from the pursuit of heavenly things, by any engagements, or attachments here below:—*They that weep*, should be *as though they wept not*; restraining all inordinate grief for the loss of our dearest friends, or for any other afflictions, since all our present sufferings must so quickly have an end: *They that rejoiced* too, should be *as though they rejoiced not*; considering the transitory nature of all their worldly comforts, and therefore they ought to sit loose by them: *They that buy* too, should be *as though they possessed not*; not trusting in uncertain riches, not placing their happiness in these transitory possessions, but looking for, and diligently seeking after a more enduring substance: *They that use this world* should *not abuse it*, to flatter their pride, or gratify their luxury; *for the fashion of this world passeth away*: All things here below are fleeing as the shadow, and will shortly vanish as the dream when one awaketh. Indeed, a deep sense of the vanity of time, and the importance of eternity, is needful, to regulate both our joys and sorrows, and to keep our affections disengaged from the objects of sense,
which

which would otherwise enslave us. Alas! we are dying worms, in a dying world; the longest life is but a short time; every moment we are in jeopardy, and what is all the world to a dying man? My christian brethren, think *seriously* of these things.—*Man that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower, he fleeth, as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.* What is your life? it is even as a vapour, that continueth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. Be wise therefore in time, and duly consider your latter end, *What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* If the soul be saved, all is safe, eternally safe, if the soul be lost, all is lost for ever and ever.

The great concern of every true believer in Christ, is this; that he may dwell in Christ and Christ in him; that he may be one with Christ and Christ with him; that he may be espoused to him by all the endearing ties of love and grace, through all the circumstances of his health, his life, and his calling. Thus married to Christ, he will
be

be in union and communion for ever with all that are Christ's. He shall surely meet them all in glory, and dwell with them, never to part again.

If *Cicero*, a poor heathen, could console himself with the thought of quitting a turbulent disordered world, and of enjoying the company of philosophers and his beloved *Cato*, in another state: What reason has the real christian to exult in the promise of being brought unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable company of Angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men, made perfect, and (what crowns all) to JESUS, the mediator of the new covenant.

Blessed be God, he who testifieth these things faith, *Surely I come quickly*.—May your hearts and mine faithfully and joyfully reply, *Even so, come, Lord Jesus!* Amen.

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